

Sabine

National Wildlife Refuge

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Refuge Fact

- Established: 1937.
- Acres: 124,511.
- Location: the refuge is located eight miles south of Hackberry, on State Highway 27 in Cameron Parish, Louisiana.

Natural History

- Refuge occupies the marshes between the Calcasieu and Sabine Rivers in southwest Louisiana.
- Concentrations of ducks, geese, alligators, muskrats, nutria, raptors, wading birds, shorebirds, blue crabs and shrimp. Olivaceous cormorant, snowy egret and common egret rookeries present.
- Open water 39,844 acres and grass/marsh 84,667 acres.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- 10-person staff.
- Approximately 300,000 visitors annually.
- Refuge visitors contribute to the local economy through the purchase of gasoline, food items, and fishing/hunting license sales.
- Current budget (FY 02) \$697,000.
- Gas and oil exploration activities generate financial returns to the local economy during oil well drilling and seismic exploration activities, and in the form of federally mandated excise tax revenues to local governments from oil extraction activities.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and other birds.
- Preserve and enhance coastal marshes for fish and wildlife.
- Provide outdoor recreation and environmental education for the public.

- Water management to control salinity levels and preserve marsh and aquatic habitats.
- Creation of marsh through beneficial use of dredge material.
- Open water terracing for waterfowl and fishery habitat enhancement.
- Impoundments for preserving marsh and freshwater fishery.
- Prescribed fire for marsh and coastal prairie restoration and maintenance.
- Mechanical and chemical control of invasive, non-native plant species.
- Trapping of nutria and alligators for population management.
- Environmental education and interpretation of importance of coastal wetlands.
- Law enforcement for protection of wildlife resources and public safety.
- Public and private partnerships for resource management and outreach.

Public Use Opportunities

- 1.5 mile wetland walkway and observation tower.
- Visitors center with interpretive displays.
- Four waterside recreational areas with boat launches.
- Salt and fresh water fishing, crabbing and seasonal castnetting for shrimp.
- Canoeing and kayaking canals, bayous and marshes.
- Blue Goose Trail and observation tower.
- Wildlife observation and photography.
- Waterfowl hunting and special youth waterfowl hunt.

Calendar of Events

Management Tools

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January: refuge waterfowl hunts; Fur and Wildlife Festival in nearby Cameron.

February: wintering waterfowl preparing for spring migration to breeding areas.

March: refuge interior opens to boating and other recreational activities; National Wildlife Refuge System Birthday March 14, with Centennial Celebration in 2003.

April: increase in migration of songbirds; bull alligators calling in the marsh; Earth Day.

May: recreational castnetting for brown shrimp; International Migratory Bird Day.

June: National Fishing and Boating Week.

July: Federal Duck Stamp on sale.

August: Recreational castnetting for white shrimp; shorebirds arrive in first migration wave.

September: early teal hunting season; alligator hatchlings appear; National Hunting and Fishing Day.

October: Refuge interior closes to boating and other activities; Fall migration in full swing; National Wildlife Refuge Week; Cal-Cam Fair in Sulphur.

November: regular waterfowl hunting season.

December: regular waterfowl hunts; Audubon Christmas Bird Counts.

Refuge open all year to fishing and crabbing along Highway 27.

Questions and Answers

Where is the Wetland Walkway?

The Wetland Walkway is located four miles south of the headquarters on the right hand side of the road. There is a parking lot, restrooms and a water fountain for your convenience.

How long is the Marsh Trail?

The Marsh Trail is 1.5 miles long. It is a concrete walk with a boardwalk portion. There is also an observation tower.

Where can I see an alligator?

The alligator or the “King of the Marsh” can be found in any of the canals or bayous located on the refuge or on the Wetland Walkway.

What kind of fish are people catching?

The most common species caught are red fish, flounder, specks, alligator gar, black bass, crappie, channel catfish, and sunfish.

Have there been any unusual bird sightings?

Birders are a great asset in answering this question. With the information we receive from avid birders the refuge is able to give more concrete answers about unusual sightings. Stop in the refuge office to get the latest bird sightings.